

IN THE CLAIMS

Current Listing Of Claims:

1. – 4. (Cancelled)

5. (currently amended) A method for forming hardened interconnects comprising:
depositing a metal film over a semiconductor wafer surface;
introducing an additional metal species comprising beryllium to the metal film;
heating the deposited metal film with the introduced metal species;
allowing the metal film to cool, so as to form precipitates of the introduced metal species; and
after allowing said heated metal film to cool performing chemical-mechanical polishing wherein the additional metal ~~precipitate hardens~~ precipitates harden said deposited metal film to reduce the rate of said polishing.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the deposited metal film is copper.

7 - 21 (cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising introducing a solute selected from the group consisting of silver, aluminum, zinc, zirconium, chromium, and magnesium before heating the deposited metal film with the introduced metal species.